

(15)

POLITICAL
REFLECTIONS

FOR THE

YEAR, 1722, &c.

WITH

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

CONDUCT

Of Some Great

MINISTERS

OF

STATE.

L O N D O N :

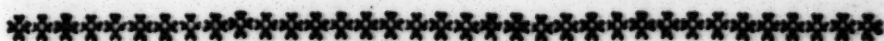
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POLITICAL
REFLECTIONS
for the YEAR, 1722.



CHAP. I.



U M A N Wisdom, weak and short Sighted, was never able to provide against all the Accidents of future Times; Millions of Circumstances arise that baffle all the Endeavours of our ancient Law-makers, and elude the Force of the most binding Ordinances; hence it comes to pass that

that all Governments in the Universe have had their Periods; and tho' some have stretch'd many Ages, yet all are swallow'd up in Time; some by foreign Invasion, some by Civil War, and some by neglecting to put their own Laws in Execution, or advancing new ones in Prejudice to the old Constitution, (which always has, and ever will be obtain'd by Corruption). *Cyrus*, the Founder of the *Persian* Empire, left such a System of Government behind him, as supported the Monarchy under a Race of weak Princes, and had the same Martial Discipline been preserv'd that rais'd that Empire, it had not been made so easy a Prey to the Conqueror. *Rome* it self, proud *Rome*, who vaunted in the Dominion of the whole World, fell at last a Sacrifice to a Fellow Citizen; those Laws which were wont to be imploy'd for the Publick Utility, became at last, the usurp'd Property of a private Person; and that Military Power which was necessary to Support the Usurpation, got at last the Dominion; till by the Ambition and Perfidy of the Commanders, who invited the barbarous Nations to their Assistance, that vast Empire under no Law, came to be parcel'd out into small Principalities; 'tis then the Business of a State to have a strict Observance of their ancient Laws, and to admit of no Relaxation; all Indulgencies weaken a State, 'tis an Inlet for

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Corruption, and undermines the Safety of the Community; 'tis yet more dangerous to make a new Law in direct Opposition of the old; the Truth of this appears in the Creation of the *Decem Viri* of Rome, where, both the Power of Consuls, and Tribunes being suspended, the Empire was near falling under their Tyranny; so King CHARLES the First lost his Life, by making the Parliament perpetual; and that very Parliament was subdu'd by the Army they had rais'd themselves without any Warrant of Law. There is an inflexible Propensity in a People, to their ancient Constitution, which nothing but a thorough Conquest can ever eface; Amusements and Artifice have prevail'd for a Time, but always have been return'd with Confusion to the Projectors. I would not be suppos'd to be so Tenacious of the old Forms of Government, as not to admit of new ones in order to the Preservation of a State; I am very sensible, no Kingdom can subsist without them; for the Safety of a Prince does not only depend upon the proper Use he can make of his own Subjects, but sometimes upon such Alliances as think it their Interest to preserve him for their own Sakes, against the incroaching Power of an ambitious Neighbour; in such Cases, extraordinary Sums must be rais'd, and Troops levied in Proportion to the Danger; Ballance of Power justifies

stifies the Title of War, and the Apprehen-
 sion of Slavery must be suspended to secure
 the publick Liberty ; but still all these ex-
 traordinary Preparations are to be carried
 on as near as possible upon the Plan of the
 old Laws. The Armies rais'd by the Prince
 are to be subsisted by the People, and not to
 be more, or any longer than the present Exi-
 gency ; and indeed it is an unanswerable
 Argument of the Sincerity of a Governor,
 when the military Command is conferr'd on
 Men of Quality and Fortune, People of this
 Condition are not likely to run into arbitrary
 Measures, as was verified in King *James* the
 second's time, who, tho' he had an Army
 sufficient to have conquer'd his People, was
 almost universally deserted by his own Offi-
 cers, that were Men of Distinction : *Cromwell*
 one of the wisest private Men that ever ob-
 tain'd the Sovereignty, was aware of this
 Danger, and in his Progress to Power hardly
 ever gave a considerable Command, but to
 ordinary Persons, such as he knew depended
 upon his Welfare. We cannot have a greater
 Instance of the Sincerity of our Governors,
 than in the Resolution taken to lay such an
 Imposition on those, who eternally give us
 Disquiet, as will if they have any Regard
 to their own Preservation, force them to leave
 a Country, in which they never can hope to
 pay a less Tribute, or make them seriously
 reflect

reflect on the Errors of their former Lives, and become one People under one Prince, from whom alone they can expect Liberty and true Happiness.

CHAP. II.

WHAT *Matchiavel* tells us of the Difficulties that attend an Usurper in securing his new Conquests, is certainly verified in a Prince who comes to a Crown by an Election of the Majority of the People, while there is another Title depending to his Dominions. "For they are both equally oblig'd to disgust their Subjects by extraordinary Taxes, and quartering of Soldiers." The only Remedy for this Inconvenience is absolutely to extinguish the Family of the former Prince, or those who have eminently distinguished themselves in Support of the old Title.

AND I take this to be the most frugal and most secure way to keep a Nation in his Interest; for those very People who contributed to bring about a Revolution, in order to secure their Liberties, will never think them safe under a new Administration (however just and undesigning) who takes the same means

means to preserve them, the other did to destroy them ; Men that have run such Hazards, will naturally expect to be secure their own Way, and not by the Model of Ministers, however prudent and disinterested.

IT will be in vain to tell People, that the Disaffection is so general, that they are oblig'd for the publick Security to keep up an unaccustomed military Force, they will naturally ask, what are Causes of their Discontents, and rather impute it to Male-Administration, than Disloyalty ; and the Course of their Argument must tend to say, the Ministers raise Armies to support unwarrantable Power.

POLICY therefore teaches us, to let out all that ill Blood at once, which may endanger our Security ; the Memory of a violent Action wears out by degrees, whereas he that commits frequent Acts of Justice, tho' for his own Security, will be look'd upon as cruel, and in a short time be thought intollerable ; 'tis a mistaken Lenity to forgive Traytors, their Inclinations will be still for their own Party, and one Escape from Danger will encourage them to run into another. That one Maxim, that a Multitude can't be punished, has been the Foundation of all the Rebellions in the World.

THERE is nothing so common, as to see those very People in the foremost Ranks against you, whom you have set at Liberty
by

by an Act of Indemnity, and certainly a Prince is in more Danger from a second Attempt, than he was from a First, in as much as those People have seen their Mistakes before, and makes a better Provision against the Disappointments they meet with: From whence, one may infer, that he that advises Indifference, or Forgiveness in the Case of one Rebellion, hopes for the false Merit of being again considerable in the suppressing another.



C H A P. III.

AS there is no Government in the World, where there are not a great many disaffected Members; so I believe it probable that *England* furnishes more discontented People than any other Kingdom in the World, I mean of more different Sorts; for besides, those that Mutiny upon the Common Principles of Religion and Policy, which is still varied in a thousand different Shapes: Our Governors find a greater Uneasiness from the Pretenders to Merit; no sooner are they seated in the Ministerial Office, but every Man puts a Price upon his Services; which if not rated according

ing to his own Estimate, are immediately turn'd against the Ministry; but however, we are happy in this, that they have a Power to oblige more who can serve them essentially, than to apprehend any great Danger from the ineffectual Rage of their Enemies: We have seen some Instances of this Sort, where tho' the Guilt has been almost universally avow'd, yet the Minister has been brought off by his superior Talents and Sufficiency.

Every Age has given us Examples of Complaints against Ministers, and we rarely have seen, where their Attempts upon the Liberties of the People have been flagrant, but they have met with some exemplary Punishment. I need not instance the *Spencers*, *Mich. de la Pole*, Earl of *Suffolk*, Cardinal *Woolsey*, the Duke of *Buckingham*, &c. For these were Ministers to Princes, who I think one may say, had more absolute Power vested in them, than in any since the Revolution. Indeed we have had some Impeachments and Accusations for Misdemeanors since, which have come to nothing till the Beginning of this happy Reign, where Bills of Attainder have pass'd upon wicked Ministers, and we ought to believe this sufficient, to deter any to fall into the like Practices for the future.

Not but the Publick has now and then receiv'd some sensible Injustice, but it falling
lightly

lightly upon every Body, no one prosecuted it with an Animosity equal to the Crime ; indeed the last Misfortune has been attended with worse Consequences, because great Numbers were immediately and heavily loaded ; this has created a new Species of Malecontents, and turn'd Multitudes of their former Friends against the Ministry, who abstract not the Persons from the Office ; they say, the Ministry took away above half their Property, and they will never be satisfied with any Ministry, that does not bring it back again to them, not considering the Impossibility of such an Attempt, and the Impracticability, without a new Fund to make their Condition any better, which must retrench upon the Property of some body else.

As for those People, who plead an Indefeasible Hereditary Right, they certainly can have no Satisfaction, till they have the Prince, who they pretend has in him the Right of Inheritance ; but for the rest who wish well to the present Establishment, and under which alone we can hope to enjoy our holy Religion, and invaluable Liberties. 'Tis evident their Expectations is, the Cessation of Taxes, and a frugal Management in order to pay off the publick Debts, certainly no Nation ever enjoy'd so serene a Tranquillity, as we did before the bringing in upon us that fatal

South-Sea Scheme : For tho' People might complain of the Burthen of Taxes, yet the Value of their Estates was so considerably enhanc'd by the Circulation of publick Credit, that few were sensible of the Burthen ; for no Body can disallow, when Mony is cheap, the Value of all Commodities must rise, which must enable the Landed Man to bear the Demands upon him with less Difficulty; but this fatal Mismanagement has swallowed up all Reason, and buried Discretion in Resentment, and I wish it has not struck at the very Root of Loyalty.



CHAP. IV.

IF We look into the Practice of the World, we shall find, that all settled Maxims of Government have prov'd ineffectual, and he only succeeded, who accommodated his Conduct to the present Humours of the People and Necessity of Times, *Cæsar* perished by too great a Confidence, and *Tiberius* was ruin'd by his own Maxims of Artifice and Disimulation : Cardinal *Richlieu* always declar'd open War against his Enemies, and succeeded. But Cardinal *Mazarine* courted his Foes, in
order

order to ruin them; thus we see Men undone at one Time, and succeeded at another, by the same Operations.

SOME People from hence conclude, that Fate and Fortune have a superior Direction of our Councils, and Spight of all our Wisdom, Affairs will have their own Event; certain it is, that whoever has to deal with Men of different Passions and Interests, to succeed, must often change his Measures, but the only Art lies in securing the Majority, which is always to be obtain'd one way, *that is*, by framing your Conduct according to the Laws of the Land and Common Equity; all Actions founded upon Law carry a Reverence with them, and tho' they are a little against the Grain, yet People are not ashamed to obey them, because in some Sense or other they have contributed to the making of that Law, so that it is an Act of their own Consent; whereas all Ordinances that have not this Warrant, strike at the very Liberties of Mankind; it is like putting Manna-cles or Fetters upon Men, ignominious Shackles, that no one can bear: And therefore, it is a very great Misfortune, when any Law made in Favour of the People, is by the Necessity of the Times, oblig'd to be suspended, they will always complain, and because they do not immediately see the Danger, will scarce believe

lieve it : 'Tis certainly then Prudence in any Government, to fall into these Measures as seldom as possible; and the only way to avoid it, is to strike at the very Root of those who disturb you; Terror will cost you less than Love, and be better attended, for People will do that for Fear, which they will refuse upon any other Obligation.

ANY Abatement of the Rigour of the Laws, begets new Criminals, like our late Act of Transportation, which has occasioned more Felons in one Month, than were in three before; but tho' Terror be absolutely necessary to keep a Commonwealth in Tranquility; yet Prudence will teach a Magistrate, that he ought at least to shew the People, he has a regard to their Interest, which may be do neither by enlarging their Trade, Abatement of Taxes, or paying of Publick Debts, these, as they immediately relate to their Property, are very gracious Acts; besides that, the paying of any one Debt, gives a Reputation to the rest; and the Value of them encreases in Proportion to the Security of the Principle; this we saw not long ago in *England*; where, upon a Resolution taken to pay off some *Annuities* at Six *per Cent.* the Proprietors were immediately satisfy'd with Five; and the same Thing would happen with those who are now at Five *per Cent.* if Care were taken

taken to Pay them off, unless they accept of
Four *per Cent.*



C H A P. V.

THERE is nothing attended with worse Consequences to a State, than by affixing opprobrious and irreconcilable Names upon one another; thus one half of the People call the other Villains, without examining into their Characters, or regarding their Conduct; 'tis enough for them, if a Man is seen to speak, or eat with one they do not like, he is accounted a *Jacobite*, that sometimes Votes for the Liberty of his Country, on the Contrary, he is giving up every thing to Despotick Power, that sometimes gives his Assent to Things necessary for the Preservation of the State; *Whig* and *Tory* are the Words of Imputation, and every Man must be listed under these two Banners, whether he will, or no. The Ministers of each Side have play'd these Names successively against one another; a *Tory* Ministry has declared the *Whigs* Enemies to the Church and Monarchy. The *Whigs* have established the Church,
and

and at the Expence of their Lives and Fortunes got a King of their own, and impute with too much Reason, the Tendency of the *Tories* to *Popery* and Arbitrary Power. These Imputations now are taken for granted, and to Vote on either Side, is to have all the Vices lay'd upon that Party; a Bitterness has proceeded from hence, one to another, which may one Time or another, prove fatal to our Constitution.

BUT, I am far from thinking this Evil without a Remedy, tho' I am sure the Cure of it must begin very High; if Men of Integrity, of all Appellations, were taken into the Ministry, this Confidence would remove that Rancour and Animosity, which now daily improves; and they would by this Commerce insensibly slide into one another's Esteem, and perhaps continue so, till the Names of Distinction were lost. Indeed, it is not to be wonder'd at, that a Man of Honour and Fortune, gives a Loose to Revenge, when conscious of no criminal Thought against the Government, he sees him self branded with Infamy; look'd upon unworthy of a Publick Trust, and indeed, as a Traytor, that wanted only an Opportunity to put his suppos'd Wishes in Execution; hence it comes that Princes are reckon'd to have Enemies amongst some sort of Men, because

cause they are refus'd the Opportunities of shewing their Friendship. Queen *Elizabeth*, whose Maxims were founded upon the best Policy, maintain'd two different Factions at Court; by this means she had a just Representation of Men and Things, and was able to Steer that Course which most conduced to the Publick Good. Honour and Interest are the two great Springs of all our Actions; if you take away from Men, the Means of enlarging their Talents these Ways, you make 'em desperate, and they will run into Extravagancies (they would be otherways asham'd of) to obtain them.

LIBERTY is the darling Principle of the Soul, and all thinking Men know, it is only to be found in a Parliamentary Constitution; that *Jure Divino* Right of Princes is but in a few Peoples Mouths, and in the Thoughts of fewer, and no wise Men will make use of this Argument, but when they are driven to Extremities.

'Tis natural enough for People to believe any Change will be for the better, when they think their Condition insupportable; if Ministers did not put such strong Guards upon the Avenues to the Fountain of Favour, they would have but little Opposition, and their Princes meet with less Disquiet.

CHAP. VI.

AS it is impossible for any Government so to deport it self, as not to give Discontent to some sort of People, so it is as unlikely, that it should enjoy an uninterrupted Repose, and not meet with some Enterprizing Men, who to Aggrandize themselves, would subvert the Ancient Establishment; the Ambition and Revenge of Ill-Men, has often endanger'd a State; but the most frequent and most dangerous Conspiracies, are those that are founded upon the Principles of Religion; for this being every Body's Concern, it becomes more extensive, and People come with greater Alacrity into an Affair, where the worst Event is, the Salvation of their Souls; this Enthusiasm transports Men to be altogether careless of their Persons, and what Life is safe, which has to deal with such Adversaries.

MOST of the Conspiracies we have had in *England*, since the Reformation have been of this Sort, except that wild Project of the Earl of *Essex's* in Queen *Elizabeth's* Days; my Lord *Russel's* in King *Charles the 2d's*, and a few more; all those which have given us most Danger, have been founded upon

upon the Plan of Popery; here has been the eternal Source of all the Machinations which sometimes have endanger'd the Constitution it self.

Lewis the 14th of *France*, in order to secure himself from all the Troubles that might arise from the reform'd Church in his Dominions, resolv'd upon the utter Expectation of it, which he did effectually, and ever after sat easy on his Throne, in Respect of Intestine Commotions, (for I look upon the Affair of the Cevenoies to be inconsiderable) a cruel Piece of Policy, but of such a Sort, as gave him the greatest Security; on the contrary, the *Hollanders* admit of all sorts of Religion in their State, and (except the *Jews*) they almost equally participate the Benefits of their Laws, and yet we rarely hear of any Enterprizes against their State.

BUT then indeed, this is to be consider'd, that an avow'd Allegiance to the State, entitles them to Places of Profit, and Preferments of Trust; I will not determine which Method is most Prudent; but certainly we may impute, most of the Conspiracies against our Government, to the Permission of a People who think themselves injur'd, have to live amongst us; the very Elements of *Popery*, teaches its Votaries to propagate their

their Faith, by any means whatsoever, and this Kingdom will never be free from Conspiracies, till the *Roman* Religion be the establish'd Religion of the Country, and we have nothing more likely to prevent the Effects of them, than to make some People have a greater Advantage in the Discovery, than they could have in the Execution.

'Twas a dangerous Piece of Policy in *Walsingham* to hazard Queen *Elizabeth's* Life in the slow Detection of the Actors in *Babington's* Plot; 'twas possible that *Gifford* might have made some slight Discoveries, in order to have amus'd the Ministry, till the time of Execution.

THE Assassination Plot in King *William's* Time, might have taken Effect by the same Mannagement; besides, why should any Minister risque the precious Life of a Prince for the barbarous Curiosity of knowing how many People will come into an Affair of this Sort; 'tis possible that some Men might never think of such an Attempt for the future, if they were startled in the Beginning, and it is absolutely necessary for a Minister to avoid the Imputation of Cruelty, as 'tis to deserve that of Justice.

C H A P. VII.

TH E R E is no Condition of Life attended with so many Difficulties, as that of a first Minister, whether it be in an absolute or limited Monarchy ; the very Station he holds, contracts him the Malignity of the Great, and even the common Faults inseparable to human Nature, are charg'd to his Account by the Multitude as the greatest Crimes ; nor does he often find a Place of Repose in the Breast of his Prince, for if he be advanc'd by Favour, he is oblig'd to do whatsoever he commands him, and then, nothing is more inconstant than the Heart of Men ; if he is rais'd to that Dignity by the necessity of Affairs, the least Miscarriage may ruin him ; for a Prince will not easily forgive a Person a Fault, who seems in some sort to be impos'd upon him.

Cardinal *Woolsey* is an eminent Instance of the former, being rais'd from a private Station of Life, to the greatest Power, by Favour of his Prince ; was by the same Prince depriv'd of every Thing, for his Insincerity in the Affair of the Divorce of Queen *Katherine*.

T H E

THE Duke of *Buckingham* indeed, maintain'd his Place in his Prince's Favour, by an universal Compliance to his Will, but then had been (if not prevented by his Interposition) a Sacrifice to the People; it is certainly a very difficult Employment to steer so equally between despotick Power and Popularity, that you do not strike against one or other of these Rocks; and it is still more difficult than it was, because formerly in buying of one Man, you bought off many, whereas now, every one puts a Value upon himself, and his Price is in Proportion to his Expence; so that he who is not actually oblig'd by Benefits, becomes an Enemy. In that which was called the Pensionary Parliament of King *Charles* the Second, very few receiv'd Wages for doing their Business, and the memorable, but true Story of 10000 *l.* left in a Hackney Coach, is a Convincing Instance of the moderate Expence of those Times. It is not to be wonder'd at, that in subsequent Times, the Demand should rise higher, and that when every Individual found himself necessary, he should insist upon the Merit of his Compliance; but 'tis indeed surprizing, that Men should think, of purchasing their Assent to that, which they would concur in without it. I cannot help believing, that the Majority would

would always incline to the real Interest of their Country, if there was not the least Expectation of a Reward: Besides, if we consider, how high the Demand may be, one Time or other, and the Necessity there will be of Parsimony, the Difficulties will be unfurmountable, let whosoever be in the Administration.

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